

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS FOR YOUR FILM PRODUCTION

The St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area, at the center of Florida's Gulf of Mexico coast, is home to many production companies and on-location media work. Our cities and businesses support film production and offer various locations, skilled production crew and support services. If your production plans to **shoot between June 1 and November 30**, there are a few things you need to know about the Hurricane Season. In the unlikely event that a tropical storm occurs during your time in Florida, you will be prepared to minimize its effects on your company by following a few simple precautions.

In this document you will find:

Emergency information, phone numbers and websites for storm updates, road conditions, evacuation bulletins, shelters, medical needs, law enforcement, Red Cross, utilities, downed power lines, and more.

Invaluable information about PREPAREDNESS, DISASTER KIT, EVACUATION, and STORM RECOVERY can be found on the Pinellas County Emergency Management website. Please have producers, production managers, UPMs, coordinators and department keys read through the website thoroughly.

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/default.htm>

HURRICANE FACTS

What is a Hurricane?

A hurricane is a type of tropical cyclone, which is a generic term for a low pressure system that generally forms in the tropics. The cyclone is accompanied by thunderstorms and, in the Northern Hemisphere, a counterclockwise circulation of winds near the earth's surface. Tropical cyclones are classified as follows:

Tropical Depression

An organized system of clouds and thunderstorms with a defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds* of 38 mph (33 kt**) or less.

Tropical Storm

An organized system of strong thunderstorms with a defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds of 39-73 mph (34-63 kt).

Hurricane

An intense tropical weather system of strong thunderstorms with a well-defined surface circulation and maximum sustained winds of 74 mph (64 kt) or higher.

During hurricane season, which runs from **June 1st to November 30th**, conditions in the tropics become optimal for the development of hurricanes. Each year, an average of 10 tropical storms develops in the tropics. Of these, six are likely to become hurricanes. While many of these storms do not affect the U.S. coastline, the threat of a major impact from a hurricane is still a real concern. In an average 3-year period, roughly five hurricanes strike the U.S. coastline, averaging 50 to 100 casualties.

In order to give you a better idea of the months of the year that historically have had the most hurricanes, please see the chart below.

Table 8. Tropical storms and hurricanes in the Atlantic, Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico by month of origin, [updated from Neumann et al. (1999)], and for hurricanes striking the U.S. mainland 1900-2000 [updated from Hebert et al. (1997)].

MONTH	1944-2000 TROPICAL STORMS AND HURRICANES		1944-2000 HURRICANES		1900-2000 U.S. HURRICANES	
	Total	Average	Total	Average	Total	Average
JANUARY-APRIL	3	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.00
MAY	8	0.1	2	*	0	0.00
JUNE	31	0.5	11	0.2	11	0.11
JULY	50	0.9	22	0.4	18	0.18
AUGUST	151	2.6	95	1.6	42	0.42
SEPTEMBER	198	3.5	129	2.3	65	0.64
OCTOBER	100	1.8	60	1.1	25	0.25
NOVEMBER	26	0.5	16	0.3	4	0.04
DECEMBER	4	0.1	2	*	0	0.00
YEAR	571	10.0	337	5.9	165	1.63

¹ Includes subtropical storms after 1967. See Neumann et al. (1999) for details.
 * Less than 0.05.

The severity of hurricanes (and the potential damage they can cause) is classified in different categories of severity according to the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale. A Category 1 storm has the lowest wind speeds, while a Category 5 hurricane has the strongest. **These are relative terms, because lower category storms can sometimes inflict greater damage than higher category storms, depending on where they**

strike and the particular hazards they bring. In fact, tropical storms can also produce significant damage and loss of life, mainly due to flooding.

Category 1: Winds 74-95mph - Minimal damage to building structures. Damage primarily to unanchored mobile homes, shrubbery, and trees. Also, some coastal road flooding and minor pier damage.

Category 2: Winds 96-110mph - Some roofing material, door, and window damage to buildings. Considerable damage to vegetation, mobile homes, and piers. Coastal and low-lying escape routes flood 2-4 hours before arrival of center. Small craft in unprotected anchorages break moorings.

Category 3: Winds 111-130 mph - Some structural damage to small residences and utility buildings with a minor amount of curtainwall failures. Mobile homes are destroyed. Flooding near the coast destroys smaller structures with larger structures damaged by floating debris. Terrain continuously lower than 5 feet ASL may be flooded inland 8 miles or more.

Category 4: Winds 131-155 mph - More extensive curtainwall failures with some complete roof structure on small residences. Major erosion of beach areas. Major damage to lower floors of structures near the shore. Terrain continuously lower than 10 feet ASL may be flooded requiring massive evacuation of residential areas inland as far as 6 miles.

Category 5: Winds greater than 155 mph - Complete roof failure on many residences and industrial buildings. Some complete building failures with small utility buildings blown over or away. Major damage to lower floors of all structures located less than 15 feet ASL and within 500 yards of the shoreline. Massive evacuation of residential areas on low ground within 5 to 10 miles of the shoreline may be required.

*** Sustained winds**

A 1-minute average wind measured at about 33 ft (10 meters) above the surface.

**** 1 knot = 1 nautical mile per hour or 1.15 statute miles per hour. Abbreviated as "kt".**

WATCH VS. WARNING - KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

- A **HURRICANE WATCH** issued for your part of the coast indicates the possibility that you could experience hurricane conditions within 36 hours. This watch should trigger your production's disaster plan. Protective measures should be initiated, especially actions requiring extra time such as securing a boat, leaving a barrier island, etc.
- A **HURRICANE WARNING** issued for your part of the coast indicates that sustained winds of at least 74 mph are expected within 24 hours

or less. Once this warning has been issued, *your production should be in the process of completing protective actions and deciding the safest location to be during the storm.*

When the threat of a storm becomes real, it is imperative to have a plan in place to help you make timely and useful preparations in case disaster should strike. Always stay tuned to local television and radio stations for the mayor and county manager's bulletins.

For up to the minute information, visit

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/bulletin.htm>

In Pinellas or Hillsborough counties, you can watch local news coverage on the 24-hour news service on Bay News 9 on Channel 9, WFLA NBC Channel 8, WTSP CBS News Channel 10, Fox Channel 13, or WFTS ABC local news on Channel 28. The Pinellas County [government access channel](#) is 18 or 44.

BE PREPARED

If your production is taking place during hurricane season, which runs from **June 1 to November 30**, there are few things you will need to know if a hurricane threatens. Hurricanes are one of the most devastating and costly natural disasters to experience, and a fact of life that your production should be ready to face in the unlikely event that a hurricane warning is issued while your production is in town.

The goal of this hurricane preparedness brochure is to inform you of the hazards and provide knowledge that can be used to take **ACTION**. It is important to be prepared in the event of a storm and to know what to do before, during and after a hurricane. The most important thing is to be informed and be prepared. Being prepared will prevent disaster and reduce damage.

The following are important recommendations on how you can prepare your production for a hurricane. This may help mitigate your cost of windstorm damage, save property and possibly lives.

Begin with a solid **HURRICANE PLAN**. Production companies should put a hurricane plan in writing so that employees have a clear understanding of how the company will operate before, during and after a storm. Businesses and individuals alike need to identify vulnerabilities ahead of time and take protective measures.

YOUR HURRICANE PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE:

1. Production information and dates

- Describe the type of production in detail
- Describe the dates your production will be filming in Florida
- Describe your soundstages, offices and locations as to hurricane readiness

2. Evacuation Plans

- Determine if your production is in an evacuation zone, whether for accommodations, locations, office or stages. The local film commission can assist by providing evacuation zone maps and information (detailed information sources, Websites, phone numbers and references are below).
- If you are in an evacuation zone, make evacuation plans.
 - For cast and crew, determine where they will go. Keep in mind that local crew will probably have personal hurricane plans, but will require some time to implement them.
 - For cast and crew who are not local, production should make plans to shelter them in a safe place, or to relocate them away from the hurricane.
 - Make plans for your equipment and vehicles, to keep them safe from wind and flood hazards.
 - Make plans to secure your locations, production offices and soundstages. Determine alternates for these facilities in the event any are damaged by the storm.
 - Assemble emergency contact information for all cast and crew, and make a plan as to how you will re-contact them after the hurricane has passed.

3. Disaster Kits

- Information about disaster kits should be disseminated to all cast and crew. Disaster kits should include at a minimum, 3 days of supplies such as cash, fuel, first aid and medicines, food and water, flashlights and spare batteries, clothing and bedding. Production itself may wish to assemble some of these necessities for cast and crew members who will need them.

4. Designate Hurricane Plan Coordinator

- Determine the member of the production team who will be responsible for activating the hurricane plan, and for monitoring the weather advisories. Determine which production department heads will assist in implementing the plan, if necessary.

IF A HURRICANE WATCH IS DECLARED:

- Monitor weather advisories continuously. Major advisories are issued by the National Hurricane Center at 5 and 11 AM, and 5 and 11 PM, with supplemental advisories as needed.
- Begin fueling all vehicles
- Re-check evacuation plans
- Re-check disaster kits
- Prepare to secure locations, soundstages, production offices, equipment and vehicles.
- Contact the local film commission for official emergency announcements: phone 727-464-7241, or call the county's Central Information Line: 727-464-4333.
- The county's Emergency Management Website is: <http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/default.htm>

IF A HURRICANE WARNING IS DECLARED:

- Continue to monitor weather advisories and official emergency announcements.
- Secure locations, production offices, soundstages, equipment and vehicles against wind and flood damage.
- Evacuate cast and crew to pre-designated safe shelter or away from the hurricane affected area.
- Distribute disaster kits to those who need them.
- Assemble cast and crew emergency contact information and the post-storm communications plan.
- Contact the county's Emergency Management Office or visit the website for up-to-date announcements.

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/default.htm>

- Exchange cell phone numbers among key crew and film commission staff.

*** (Note: the film commission will close if the county declares a hurricane warning. It will re-open as soon as possible following the storm; however, personnel may be re-assigned to other county government duties during storm aftermath.)

RECOVERY FROM THE STORM:

- Re-establish contact with all cast and crew.
- Assess damage, if any, to locations, production offices, soundstages, equipment and vehicles.

- Assess any safety issues related to these facilities.
- Begin clean up of any damage to your facilities.
- Implement contingency plans, if necessary, for alternate locations, offices, soundstages etc.

SAFETY AFTER THE STORM:

- Car accidents are the main cause of injury after a hurricane; treat all intersections like a 4-way stop. Combine your trips and drive only if it's absolutely necessary.
- Stay away from all downed utility lines and do not drive over them. Do not wade in floodwaters after a storm.
- Limit your phone calls to absolute necessity and only call 911 for life threatening emergencies.

USEFUL INFORMATION

- **Useful websites:**

- National Hurricane Center www.nhc.noaa.gov
- Pinellas County Office of Emergency Management
<http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/default.htm>
- American Red Cross Tampa Bay Chapter
<http://www.redcross.org/fl/tampa-bay>
- Florida Division of Emergency Management www.floridadisaster.org
- The Weather Channel www.weather.com
- 24-hour local news: www.BayNews9.com

- **Important Contact Numbers:**

LOCAL INFORMATION (Sheriff, utilities, hotels, etc.):

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/PDF/Contact%20Information.pdf>

OR CALL Pinellas County Emergency Management: **727-464-3800**

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

FL Dept. of Emergency Management - 850-413-9900

Citizen Information Line when EOC is activated - 850-651-7560

DISASTER RESPONSE & RECOVERY AGENCIES

Red Cross – North Pinellas County: 727-446-2358

Red Cross – South Pinellas County: 727-898-3111

FEMA - 1-800-525-0321 or 660-8005

- **FILM OFFICE:**

- St. Petersburg/Clearwater Film Commission 727-464-7241
- <http://www.filmspc.com/>
- Up-to-date hurricane information:
<http://www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/default.htm>

- **INSURANCE HURRICANE LINKS:**

- Accuweather: www.accuweather.com
- Central Florida Hurricane Center: www.flhurricane.com
- CNN Weather News: www.CNN.com
- Insurance Education: <http://www.insurance-education.org/>
- Insuring Florida: www.insuringflorida.org
- National Hurricane Center: www.nhc.noaa.gov
- National Weather Service: <http://www.weather.gov/briefing/>
- The Weather Channel: www.weather.com
- Weather Underground Compuweather:
www.weatherunderground.com
- Compu Weather: www.Compuweather.com

Pinellas County EVACUATION ROUTES & ZONES

http://floridadisaster.org/publicmapping/Evac/EVAC_PINELLAS.pdf